have been laid down in the Factories Act, 1948 and the Rules framed thereunder. All industrial establishments are required to follow the same.

Closure of Mines in Orissa and Bihar

242. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of Mines are facing closure in Orissa and Bihar;

(b) if so, the reasons which let to the closure of these mines; and

(c) the details of the steps taken by Government to extend time to the mine owners to fulfil the environmental norms so that the mining activities are continued?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (c) The Supreme Court of India in the Writ Petition (Civil) No.202 of 1995 [with Writ Petition (Civil) No. 171/96] passed an interim order on 12.12.96 that in accordance with Section-2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, all on-going activity within any forest in any State throughout the country, without the prior approval of the Central Government, must cease forthwith. As per the order, every State Government must promptly ensure total cessation of all such activities forthwith. In compliance of the above order, Government of Orissa and Govt. of Bihar have closed down certain mines opeating in forest areas. Legal opinion in the matter had been obtained. The matter is sub-judice before the Hon'ble Supreme Court. The State Governments or the aggrieved parties have to approach Hon'ble Supreme Court wherever necessary.

Handing over of Sukhinda Chrome Mines to NMDC and CMC

243. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision to hand over 855 hectares of Sukhinda Chrome Mines to NMDC and CMC; and

(b) if not, the present position of the ownership of these prospected and developed chorme mines?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) and (b) Mineral Concessions are granted by respective State Governments as per provisions of Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957 and Rules made thereunder. At present the area of 855 hects. in Sukhinda Chrome Mines is under the possession of State Government of Orissa. Any further decision in the instant case has to be taken by the State Government of Orissa in accordance with the judgement dated 4.4.1995 to Hon'ble High Court of Orissa in O.J.C. Nos. 7729/93, 4701/94, 3825/94, 5422/94 and 7054/94 and Hon'ble Supreme Court judgement dated 23.7.1996 in S.L.P. Nos. 10838/95, 11391/95, 11392/95 etc.

All India Mines and Geology Conference

244. SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL
SHRIMATI ANANDIBEN JETHABHAI PATEL:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Industry Minister of Gujarat has addressed the need for geological and rational development of wealth in the country to bring prosperity to backward rural area through employment generation in All India